

OHIO NATIONAL GUARD ACTIVITIES AT THE NEWARK WORKS

by
James L. Murphy
Ohio State University Libraries
1858 Neil Avenue Mall
Columbus, Ohio 43210

Abstract.

The physical impact of Ohio National Guard encampments and "restoration" at the Newark Earthworks is documented. The lack of any significant archaeological discoveries in or adjacent to the earthworks during this period (ca. 1891-1910) lends some credence to Prufer's "vacant ceremonial center" model.

A little known aspect of the history of the Newark Earthworks is the considerable degree to which the area was impacted by military maneuvers and "restoration" conducted while it was the site of Ohio National Guard encampments from about 1891 to 1903. The dusty annual reports of the Ohio Adjutant General's office provide an interesting perspective on the latter-day military use of these prehistoric "forts".

In 1891 the 69th General Assembly passed an act to procure not less than seventy acres for a permanent camping ground for the National Guard. A three-member commission examined sites at Newark, Delaware, Prospect, Zanesville, and Columbus, concluding that a site offered by the City of Newark was the most suitable. A part of the 125 acres donated to the State included the 50 acre octagon and 30 acre square "constructed by an unknown race of people, who inhabited this section of our country prior to the Indian" (Ohio. Adjutant General 1892: 16). The City of Newark also agreed to extend both electric lines and waterlines to the campgrounds, and it was recommended that liberal appropriations be made by the Legislature for construction of storehouses, a hospital, and the planting of trees to beautify the grounds. (*Ibid.*: 17).

Encampments had been held at the Newark earthworks before, as the 17th Infantry camped in the "Old Fort" for seven days in August, 1891; but previous to development of the permanent campgrounds at Newark, the Guard encampments were dispersed over the state, as, for example, in 1891, at Waterville, Huron, Dover Bay, Marion, Bowling Green, Canton, Piqua, Xenia, and Woodsdale Island (Ohio. Adjutant General. 1892: 16, 82).

With no appropriations forthcoming, only the First Artillery and the Ninth Battalion (Colored), together comprised of some 654 men, camped at "Camp Buckeye," as the Newark campground was named, in August, 1892, and the Adjutant General again requested funds

for fencing the grounds and clearing underbrush in the grove, the balance of the \$25,000 requested to be used "toward restoring the ancient earthworks to their former grandeur." Additional proposals were made to build horse stables along Raccoon Creek and developing drains which would enter the creek below the stables. As water pipes from the city water works were subject to breakage, a series of sinks or latrines was proposed, which could be filled after each camping and new ones dug the next years. First Lieutenant Charles T. Atwell noted that there was an abundance of water obtained by driven wells thirty feet deep but also called for the construction of permanent stables, a large Quartermaster's store house, and a switch from the neighboring railroads (Ohio. Governor. Executive Documents. 1893: 1472-73, 1479, 1568).

One negative voice stood out in regretting the selection of a permanent campground. Captain H.S.O. Heistand of the 11th U.S. Infantry felt that "... a permanent camp ground is almost certain to be fitted with permanent mess house, with ranges, tables, chairs and china; permanent bath houses with tubs; permanent water closets, etc., all with drainage and sewer system, and the conveniences of hot and cold water. Store houses would soon follow, in which camp equipage, what little would remain, would be hidden away and lose to the organizations the practice of packing and transporting." In short, Heistand felt that development of a permanent camp would quickly become tantamount to "chartering a summer hotel" (*Ibid.*: 1474).

In April, 1893, the General Assembly appropriated \$12,000 to be used towards restoring the earthworks and improving the camp grounds of the National Guard, less than half the amount requested the previous year. In addition to a large barn affording room for about eighty horses, water closets were built and two storage buildings already existing were painted.

Consideration of the brief account provided by Ohio Adjutant General James C. Howe in his annual report for 1893 does not create much confidence in the accuracy of the State's restoration efforts, however. (Ohio. Adjutant General. 1894: 29-30). Though brief, the Attorney General's account of the restoration, is too long to quote here in full. "Employing a surveyor, the original lines were ascertained and a large force of workmen were

at once engaged and the work of excavating and filling commenced. The work at the start was very cautiously proceeded with, and all information which would assist in restoring the grounds to their early condition, was eagerly sought for. When convinced that the lines run were correct, the work of restoration was pushed to the utmost, the approach of uncertain weather necessitating the employment of an additional force of men in order that the partially completed work should not be left in a state to be destroyed by the severity of the winter."

Further on, Howe notes that "The embankments of the large octagon were all nearly restored to their proper height, but only four of the sides entirely completed." In addition, "a small circle at the entrance to the grounds was entirely restored and thoroughly seeded down." Some work was done on the large circle but not as much as on the octagon, and further appropriations would be required before work could continue. Perhaps Howe's most interesting remark is the following: "The lines of the octagon and circle were almost entirely obliterated by time and the work done upon the farms by those compelled to till them." Considering the fact that Howe's surveyor did not have time to utilize any astronomical observations in reconstructing these "almost entirely obliterated" lines, he did a remarkable job, to judge from modern observers (Hively and Horn 1982).

In 1894 the Adjutant General reported that the octagon was fully restored, with the ground leveled and seeded; the large circle was all that remained to be completed, and that would be done within the year. There do not appear to have been any encampments at Newark that summer, possibly due to the number of times the National Guard was called out by the Governor to quell mining disturbances at Gloucester and Wheeling Creek, as well as a lynching at Rushsylvania and the commandeering of a train at Mount Sterling by "Galvin's Army."

In 1895 only the 1st and 8th Artillery regiments, representing 1336 men, camped at Newark. A new barn sufficient to stable one hundred horses and store several tons of hay was completed. Restoration of the earthworks was "nearing completion," but no details are provided. One interesting comment was made by Captain H.M.W. Moore, Assistant Surgeon for the 1st Artillery, who noted that the ground had been used for

four encampments within three years and that each camp had had its own sinks, which were covered over when no longer used. Each camp also had, to a considerable extent, a new water supply from newly driven wells. Capt. Moore's purpose in urging that such abandoned sinks be permanently marked was to prevent contamination of new wells, but his observation also underscores the degree of disturbance to the area of the earthworks (Ohio. Adjutant General 1896: 126).

In 1896 there appear to have been no encampments at Newark. Major R.M. Davidson of the 17th Infantry was appointed superintendent of the State Camp Grounds. Davidson found the camp in a neglected condition, with parts of the grounds and embankments bare (Fig. 1). He reported seeding these areas in grass, rolling the entire octagon fort, and cleaning the grounds of fallen trees and rubbish. Property listed at the Camp Grounds included a six room house, a small barn, and two large barns with 50 and 80 stalls (Ohio. Adjutant General 1897: 123).

Only the 9th Battalion encamped at Newark in 1897 and in 1898 the only encampment was a two day rifle practice by the Denison Cadets from nearby Granville. Much of this season and the next, when there was no camp at all, since the Ohio National Guard had been sent to Cuba during the Spanish American War, was spent by Major Davidson making hay (Ohio. Governor. Executive Documents 1898, II: 729; *Ibid.* 1899, II: 451).

Major Davidson was replaced by Captain L.H. Inscho as superintendent in 1900. Activity at the camp picked up, with both the National Guard and U.S. Infantry using the grounds for target practice, and it was declared by Col. Sanford B. Stanbery of the 6th Infantry, "the only spot in Ohio to hold an encampment." About 5600 men encamped at Newark at various times in the summer of 1901. Captain Inscho saw that portions of the range washed out in the 1898 flood were restored and an additional butt was erected to provide protection for innocent passersby. (For longer range practice of a thousand yards, targets were used along the hills across Raccoon Creek, on the other side of present Route 16, and the custom appears to have been simply to warn travellers that target practice was in progress.) Inscho saw the principal need of the grounds to be better water and bathing facilities, noting that ordinary drive wells were insufficient for a large body of troops; he suggested using an engine and tank to store water from Raccoon Creek or to have the Newark water works pipe city water to the grounds. When two wells were drilled, he turned his attention to the need for permanent water pipes and sewers, as well as a power house to run the lights and to

pump water, and construction of a storage building. As late as 1902 the Adjutant General still wanted a railroad siding built to the campgrounds, although he noted that use of the Ohio Central and the lines of a Newark traction company were used to advantage. In 1902 the campgrounds were officially designated Camp McKinley and were used for brigade encampments for the first time (Ohio. Adjutant General n.d.: 8-9, 11; *Ibid.* 1903: 164, 194-95; Ohio. Governor. Executive Documents 1900, II: 750-51).

The high point of National Guard activity at the Newark earthworks occurred in 1903, when from August 17 through the 24th, the entire division encamped there, some 6149 men, the first time since they were called to Camp Bushnell at Columbus for the Spanish American War. Prior to this time the interior of the octagon had been used only for parades, reviews, and drills, but this encampment saw a tent city housing nearly 3000 men of the Second Brigade. The interior of the circle housed the First Brigade. Hundreds of visitors invaded the camp daily and an estimated 15,000 watched the grand review, although carriages were not permitted inside the grounds. An ailing Governor Nash reviewed the soldiers, and politicians such as Mark Hanna and Myron T. Herrick found the proceedings worth a visit, even though neither felt it necessary to suffer the discomfort of staying overnight. A bird's eye view of the encampment is shown in Fig. 2.

Other activities included "some fine trench building," construction of a bridge across Raccoon Creek and completion of a road some 225 feet long and twelve feet wide "down a steep cliff with sharp angles," and incorporating one five foot cut. At least 275 feet of lying trenches six feet wide were excavated, and a hundred feet of these were subsequently converted into kneeling trenches ("Engineers," *Newark Advocate* August 20, 21, 1903).

Captain Inscho's report for 1903 was brief but is of interest for mentioning that the Newark and Granville Electric Railway extended switches and sidings into the grounds and that the stables were removed from the dangerous vicinity of the rifle range and placed more conveniently near an east entrance. (Ohio. Adjutant General 1904: 490).

After the splendid martial display of the division encampment, 1904 was relatively quiet, with only the 4th and 8th regiments camping at Newark. Athens, Ohio, was the scene of the Guard's first attempt to engage in maneuvers, while the Newark octagon was cultivated for the purpose of smoothing the surface and getting a new and better sod (Ohio. Adjutant General 1905: 7.) The Newark campgrounds were virtually unused by the National Guard after 1903, and by 1905 it was

realized that the rifle range at Newark, touted as the equal of any in the West only a few years previous, would have to be abandoned. Much of the surrounding land had been laid out in small residential lots and their were threats of an injunction to stop further rifle practice. The Adjutant General recommended that land in Ottawa County, near Port Clinton be purchased, this was authorized in 1906, and the Camp Perry rifle range was completed in 1907. By 1910 the land at Newark had reverted to the City of Newark and was leased to the Mound-builders Country Club.

If the Ohio National Guard's restoration work of 1893-95 resulted in any kind of a map of the Newark earthworks, it has not been preserved in the Adjutant General's files housed at the Ohio Historical Society's Archives-Library. The encampments were given abundant play in the Newark newspapers, however, and a sketch map found in the Newark Advocate of August 18, 1903, shows the location of the rifle range, the new location of the stables, a thousand feet of railroad spur extending northward from the Newark and Granville Electric Railroad, and a wagon road cutting across the walls connecting the octagon and circle (Fig. 3).

Additional evidence of the degree to which the earthworks have been disturbed by these activities is given in the Adjutant General's report for 1904, where it is noted that the Octagon was "cultivated for the purpose of smoothing the surface and getting a new and better sod" (Ohio. Adjutant General. 1905: 7). It is presumed that this remark refers only to the interior of the Octagon and not the actual walls.

Conclusions

Given the evidence provided by the Adjutant-General's reports, a remark by the blunt-spoken Gerard Fowke is easily understood: "The Licking County Fair Association holds the title to the [Fairgrounds] circle..., while the State has acquired the circle... and the octagon. It is probable that none of these will ever suffer any diminution in size. In fact, the State authorities have a little overdone the matter of restoration. Unless there is considerable reduction, from weathering, of that portion which has lately been built up, visitors in generations to come will infer that some parts were originally heavier than others, when such was not the case." (Fowke 1902: 171).

It is remarkable that with all the activity of restoring or renovating the Newark works – not to mention the trench construction, latrine-digging, and road-building— there is no record of any significant artifact material having been discovered. While this may say something about the nature of the restoration process, it more likely reflects a real dearth of artifact material within the

Octagon and Circle, lending credence to Prufer's "vacant ceremonial center" analogy (Prufer 1964: 94-95).

Recent work by Riordan and others has documented that the walls at a number of Hopewellian earthworks were built in several stages (Riordan 1995; Switzer 1994). It is clear from historic documentation that the Newark earthworks are also multistage — including an historic period of construction some 1600 years after the earthworks were originally built.

REFERENCES CITED

- Anonymous
1903? *Beautiful Buckeye Lake*. [S.1: s.n.] Promotional brochure lacking cover, publisher, date.
- Fowke, Gerard
1902 *Archaeological History of Ohio*. Columbus: Press of Fred. J. Heer.
- Hively, Ray, and Robert Horn
1982 *Geometry and Astronomy in Prehistoric Ohio*. *Archaeoastronomy* 4: S1-S20. Supplement to *Journal for the History of Astronomy* 13.
- Ohio. Adjutant General
1892 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1891*. Columbus: Westbote Co.
1894 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1894*. Norwalk: Laning Ptg. Co.
1896 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1895*. Columbus: Westbote Co.
1897 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1896*. Norwalk: Laning Pt. Co.
1898 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1897*. Norwalk: Laning Pt. Co.
1903 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1901*. Springfield: Springfield Publ. Co.
1904 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1903*. Springfield: Springfield Publ. Co.
- 1905 *Annual Report of the Adjutant General to the Governor of the State of Ohio, for the Year Ending Nov. 15, 1904*. Springfield: Springfield Publ. Co.
- Ohio. Governor. Executive Documents
1893 *Annual Reports for 1892, Made to the Seventieth General Assembly of the State of Ohio, January 3, 1893*. Norwalk: Laning Ptg. Co.
1895 *Annual Reports for 1894...* Columbus: Westbote Co.
1899 *Annual Reports for 1898...* Columbus: Westbote Co.
1900 *Annual Reports for 1899...* Columbus: Westbote Co.
1900 *Annual Reports for 1900...* Columbus: F.J. Heer Co.
- Prufer, Olaf H.
1964 The Hopewell Cult. *Scientific American* 211 (6): 90-102.
- Riordan, Robert V.
1995 A Constructional Sequence for a Middle Woodland Hilltop Enclosure. *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 20(1): 62-104.
- Switzer, John
1994 "Newark earthworks started in 160 B.C." *Columbus Dispatch* June 14, 1994.



Figure 1 (Murphy) A post card view of the "Observatory Mound" along the west side of the circular earthworks. Note eroded, exposed soil along the embankment.



Figure 2 (Murphy) A distant view of the 1903 division encampment inside the octagon and circle.

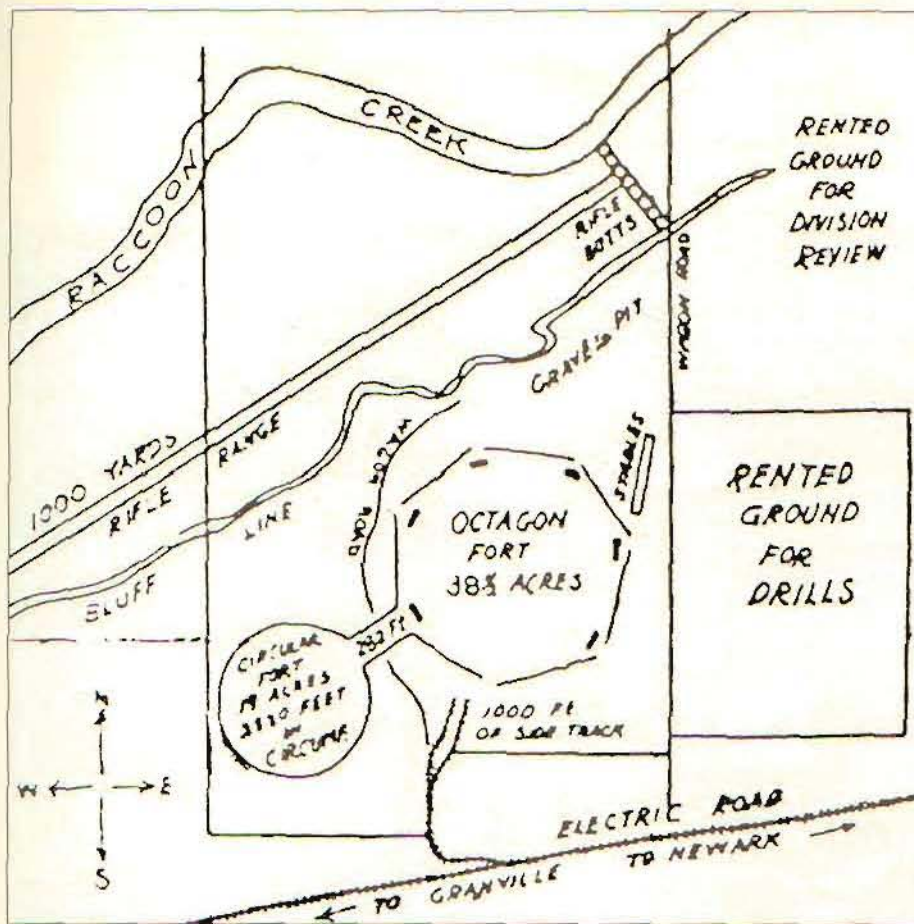


Figure 3 (Murphy) A contemporary map of the 1903 encampment showing location of the rifle range, new stables, railroad siding, and a gravel pit. From the *Newark Advocate*, August 18, 1903.



Figure 4 (Murphy) Soldiers lounging on the Observatory Mound during the 1903 encampment. From "Beautiful Buckeye Lake" brochure.